

THE WOMAN IN THE CORNER

A psychological drama inspired by Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

THE SCENE

Nora Vale has spent more than thirty-five years quietly helping her husband Richard build Ruby Brewing Company, while Richard has become its celebrated public face. At a Heritage Society dinner honoring Richard for saving the historic brewery, Nora watches as the community records the official version of their shared history—and begins to see the difference between being indispensable and being seen.

CAST IN THIS EXCERPT

NORA VALE — Early sixties. Richard's wife and longtime partner in building Ruby Brewing. Intelligent, capable, observant, and so accustomed to standing just outside the spotlight that she has barely noticed how invisible she has become.

RICHARD VALE — Mid-sixties. Nora's husband and the celebrated public face of Ruby Brewing. Charming, confident, affectionate, and genuinely proud of what they have built—without fully recognizing how much of "his" success belongs to Nora.

MARTIN — A longtime colleague at Ruby Brewing. Practical, perceptive, and more aware of Nora's contribution than Richard realizes.

ELAINE — A colleague associated with Ruby Brewing and its public promotion. Competent and comfortable in the community-facing side of the business.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — Host of the Heritage Society awards dinner.

PHOTOGRAPHER — Arranges the official Heritage Society photograph.

MAYOR HAWKINS / HERITAGE BOARD MEMBERS / GUESTS — Ensemble roles representing the community celebrating Richard and Ruby Brewing.

Amanda J Korth
720-984-8113
amanda@amandapaints.com
amandawrites.co

THE WOMAN IN THE CORNER
 ## ACT ONE
 ### Scene Two: The Photograph
 (Approx 10 min)

*The ballroom of the Trinity County Heritage Society's
 Annual Preservation Dinner.*

A banner stretches across the back of the stage.

KEEPING OUR HISTORY ALIVE

A podium stands center stage.

Round banquet tables fill the room.

Soft jazz plays underneath conversations.

People mingle with wine glasses and small plates.

*RICHARD wears a navy sport coat and is immediately
 surrounded by people.*

*NORA wears a beautifully tailored beige dress. Elegant.
 Understated. She seems almost designed not to attract
 attention.*

ELAINE enters in a rich emerald dress.

ELAINE

Nora.

You look beautiful.

NORA

Thank you.

You look...

She smiles.

Alive.

ELAINE

That was the goal.

They're taking photographs all night.

If I'm going to end up in somebody's scrapbook, I'd rather
 not look like upholstery.

Nora laughs.

A genuine laugh.

She looks down at her own dress.

NORA

I may have gone in another direction.

ELAINE

Beige is classic.

NORA

Beige is...

safe.

A beat.

ELAINE

Well...

I tend to dress like I expect free appetizers.

Richard is intercepted across the room.

MAYOR HAWKINS

Richard!

There he is!

Handshake.

RICHARD

Mayor!

Good to see you.

MAYOR HAWKINS

Congratulations.

Long overdue.

More people gather.

HERITAGE SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Richard!

Wonderful turnout tonight.

Another handshake.

BUSINESS OWNER

Richard, have you met my son?

He's thinking about opening a coffee roastery.

Richard smiles warmly.

He has all the time in the world.

Nora watches from a few feet away.

No one is intentionally excluding her.

There simply isn't room in the circle anymore.

Martin joins her.

MARTIN

You all right?

NORA

Of course.

He's good at this.

MARTIN

He is.

A beat.

MARTIN

So are you.

Before she can answer...

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen...

If you'll begin finding your seats...

We'll get started in just a few minutes.

Lights shift.

People take their places.

Richard and Nora sit together.

Elaine and Martin join them.

The evening progresses through introductions and a few brief awards.

Finally...

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

For more than thirty-five years...

Ruby Brewing has been part of our town's story.

Historic preservation isn't simply about old buildings.

It's about the people who choose to breathe life back into them.

Tonight's Heritage Legacy Award recognizes one of those people.

Please welcome...

Richard Vale.

Applause.

Richard rises.

He kisses Nora lightly on the cheek.

RICHARD

Wish me luck.

NORA

You don't need it.

Richard walks to the podium.

Standing ovation.

He waits for it to settle.

RICHARD

Thank you.

I was told I only have five minutes.

So naturally...

I prepared twenty-two.

Laughter.

RICHARD

When I bought the old brewery...

most people thought I'd lost my mind.

The roof leaked.

Half the windows were boarded over.

There were pigeons living where the fermenters should have been.

Frankly...

the pigeons seemed offended we were moving in.

Laughter.

RICHARD

People ask what the secret has been.

It isn't really a secret.

Hire people smarter than you.

Listen more than you talk.

Treat people fairly.

And don't make beer you wouldn't drink yourself.

Applause.

RICHARD

I've been unbelievably fortunate.

Great employees.

Great distributors.

Wonderful customers.

A town that has supported us from the beginning.

I'm grateful to my parents...

who taught me that your name matters more than your balance sheet.

To our employees...

many who've been with us for decades.

To our community.

To the Heritage Society.

To everyone who's believed in Ruby Brewing.

Thank you.

Truly.

Long applause.

Standing ovation.

Richard steps away from the podium.

The Master of Ceremonies returns.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Richard...

before you sit down...

could we get one photograph for the Heritage Society archives?

RICHARD

Of course.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Mayor Hawkins...

would you join us?

And the Heritage Board...

Martin, come on up.

Elaine...

you've done such wonderful work promoting Ruby Brewing.

Come join us.

Elaine looks surprised.

She rises.

Martin reluctantly follows.

People continue drifting toward the stage.

Richard shakes hands.

Laughs.

Congratulations continue.

Nora remains standing beside her chair, smiling proudly.

She waits.

Someone will surely call her.

No one does.

The photographer begins arranging people.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Mayor to the middle.

Perfect.

Richard, just half a step this way.

Martin, excellent.

Elaine, wonderful.

Everyone squeeze together.

Little closer.

Perfect.

The photographer looks through his camera.

He notices Nora standing quietly behind the group.

She is accidentally in the background.

He smiles politely.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ma'am...

would you mind taking one little step to your left?

You're just in the frame.

Nora smiles.

Almost apologetically.

She steps aside.

Now she is completely outside the photograph.

The photographer raises the camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Perfect.

Everyone look right here.

FLASH.

The moment hangs.

History has just recorded itself.

Wrong.

People begin stepping down amid applause.

Richard is still smiling.

Still shaking hands.

He returns to the table carrying the award.

He sits beside Nora.

Without thinking...

he reaches over and squeezes her hand.

RICHARD

Well...

that's over.

NORA

You were wonderful.

RICHARD

I forgot half of what I planned to say.

NORA

No.

You didn't.

He laughs.

The band begins to play again.

Conversation resumes.

Behind them...

projected briefly on a screen as guests continue talking...

the photograph appears exactly as it will someday live in
the Heritage Society archives.